

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5895

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 6061

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA. 4.)

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA

SUBJ: CURRENT STATUS OF ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS

REF: STATE 201367

1. VICE FONMIN LHO SHIN-YONG CALLED CHARGE TO FOREIGN
OFFICE THIS MORNING.

2. LHO SAID HE AND FONMIN KIM HAD MET EARLIER IN MORN-
ING WITH AMB USHIROKU. USHIROKU MADE TWO POINTS.
FIRST WAS THAT GOJ WOULD LIKE TO OPEN "AN AVENUE OF
BREAKTHROUGH." SECONDLY, HOWEVER, USHIROKU INDICATED
THA OVGACF VNDJUDXCG TO ACCEPT TANAKA LETTER AS IT IS
NOW WRITTEN. LHO ASKED USHIROKU WHAT HE MEANT BY
OPENING "AN AVENUE OF BREAKTHROUGH." USHIROKU INDI-
CATED THAT IF ROKG ACCEPTED TANAKA LETTER AS WRITTEN,
KOREANS COULD HAVE THROUGH DISCUSSION OF OTHER
MATTERS AT ISSUE WITH JAPANESE ENVOY. ACCORDING TO
LHO, USHIROKU WAS VERY VAGUE, INDICATING JAPANESE HAD
IN MIND ONLY ORAL DISCUSSIONS OF PROBLEM.

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3. LHO STRESSED TO USHIROKU THAT KOREANS ARE WILLING TO NEGOTIATE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CHANGES THEY HAVE PROPOSED IN TANAKA LETTER AND THE PRESENT JAPANESE TEXT. HOWEVER, USHIROKU WAS TOLD THAT THERE IS NOTHING TO NEGOTIATE IF JAPANESE ARE NOT WILLING TO CONSIDER ANY CHANGES IN THE TANAKA LETTER. KOREANS TOLD USHIROKU THAT TIME WAS RUNNING SHORT AND THAT IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES CRITICAL POINT WAS JAPANESE WILLINGNESS TO RECONCILE THE KOREAN AND JAPANESE "DRAFTS" AND THE LANGUAGE IN QUESTION. (LHO MADE CLEAR ROKG HAS ACCEPTED THE JAPANESE SIDE'S TEXT OF THE LETTER AS BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS OF WORKING CHANGES.)

4. USHIROKU RAISED POSSIBILITY OF GOJ DISPATCHING TAKASHIMA TO SEOUL. HE WAS TOLD ROKG WOULD WELCOME EITHER TOGO OR TAKASHIMA SO THEY COULD GAUGE FOR THEMSELVES THE DEEP FEELINGS OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE. HOWEVER, WHOEVER COMES MUST COME TODAY OR, IF THAT NOT POSSIBLE, BY EARLIEST PLANE TOMORROW. HOWEVER, CRUCIAL POINT REMAINS JAPANESE WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER CHANGES IN TANAKA LETTER. KOREANS AGAIN STRESSED TO USHIROKU THAT TIME WAS SHORT AND THAT THERE WAS GREAT PRESSURE WITHIN ROKG TO PROCEED TO ACTION AGAINST JAPANESE NOW. USHIROKU ASKED FOR SOME TIME TO CONVEY SUBSTANCE OF THEIR MEETING BY TELEPHONE AND CABLE TO TOKYO AND TO SEE WHETHER THERE WAS ANY GIVE ON GOJ POSITION ON TEXT OF TANAKA LETTER.

5. LHO SAID THAT DESPITE CONVICTION JAPANESE ARE STALLING, FONMIN ORIGINALLY GAVE USHIROKU DEADLINE OF NOON, THEN EXTENDED IT UNTIL 3:00 P.M. TODAY. USHIROKU SAID THAT, IF HE GETS APPROVAL FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS HE WILL COME TO FONOFF PERSONALLY TO CONVEY IT. IN EVENT GOJ REMAINS FIRM IN ITS REFUSAL TO CONSIDER CHANGES IN LETTER, USHIROKU WILL TELEPHONE REPLY TO LHO.

6. CHARGE ASKED LHO WHAT SCENARIO WAS IN EVENT
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JAPANESE REPLY IS NEGATIVE. LHO SAID TEXT OF ROKG ULTIMATUM HAS ALREADY BEEN PREPARED AND THAT PLAN IS TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE ANNOUNCING COUNTER-MEASURES AGAINST JAPANESE. LHO SAID ROKG IS STILL NOT PLANNING TO RELAESE PUBLICLY TEXT OF ULTIMATUM. HOWEVER, AT SAME TIME, LHO NOTED THAT OPPOSITION FLOOR LEADER HAS CALLED FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO REVIEW DIFFERENCES

BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS OVER TANAKA LETTER. LHO SAID HE HAD MENTIONED THIS TO USHIROKU. HE POINTED OUT TO USHIROKU THAT, IF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WERE TO SEE TEXT OF JAPANESE LETTER AND COMPARE CHANGES THAT ROKG WANTS, THERE WOULD BE INSTANT RAGE ON PART OF ASSEMBLYMEN AND THAT THEY WOULD JOIN THE DEMONSTRATION THEMSELVES. LHO SAID USHIROKU TOOK THIS WARNING SERIOUSLY.

7. CHARGE THEN CAREFULLY WENT OVER WITH LHO INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED REFTEL. HE CONVEYED FULL SUBSTANCE OF ASST. SECRETARY HABIB'S DISCUSSION WITH PAK KUN REGARDING OUR ROLE SO FAR, AND OUR VIEW THAT FURTHER INTERVENTION IS NOT IN OUR INTEREST AND THAT ROKG SHOULD MOVE TO EARLY FAIR SETTLEMENT OF THIS ISSUE. LHO WAS OBVIOUSLY DEEPLY DISCOURAGED BUT, IN VIEW OF PAK KUN'S EARLIER REPORT FROM WASHINGTON, WAS PROBABLY NOT SURPRISED. HE INDICATED THAT IN FACT HE WOULD NOT DARE TO REPORT IN FULL EITHER PAK'S MESSAGE OR CHARGE'S PRESENTATION. BLUE HOUSE REACTION WOULD BE FURIOUS AND HE THOUGHT IT WOULD ONLY WORSEN SITUATION. CHARGE REITERATED THAT HE WAS UNDER INSTRUCTION. THIS LHO ACKNOWLEDGED.

8. IN MORE GENERALLY DISCUSSING STATE OF PLANS IN GOVERNMENT, LHO SAID THAT PARTICIPANTS IN HIGH LEVEL MEETING EVENING OF SEPT 12 HAD BEEN: PRESIDENT, PRIMIN, FONMIN, CHIEF PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY KIM, CHONG-YOM; CIA DIRECTOR SHIN, CHIK-SU, PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR CHOE KYU-HA AND LHO HIMSELF. PARTICIPANTS HAD BEEN EXTREMELY HARSH IN CRITICIZING FONMIN KIM OVER FACT THAT JAPANESE HAD NOT GIVEN ANY SUBSTANTIVE RESPONSE TO KOREAN COMPROMISE PROPOSAL ON WORKING. CONFIDENTIAL

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LHO SAID MOOD OF MEETING WAS ONE OF INDIGNATION AND FURY OVER JAPANESE AND ONLY WITH SOME RELUCTANCE DID PARTICIPANTS AGREE TO DELAY ACTION AGAINST JAPANESE FOR AT LEAST A DAY. LHO REPEATEDLY INDICATED THAT HE AND FONMIN KIM WERE UNDER GREATEST PRESSURE AND BOTH OF THEM ARE ON EDGE OF PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION. HE EXPRESSED VIEW THAT PRESENT TENSION COULD NOT GO ON MUCH LONGER AND THAT SOME ACTION WAS ESSENTIAL NOW.

9. COMMENT: LHO'S CONSTANT THEME WAS KOREAN WILLINGNESS TO FURTHER NEGOTIATE WITH JAPANESE ON SOME COMPROMISE ON WORDING OF JAPANESE TEXT. HOWEVER, AT SAME TIME, ROKG BELIEVE THAT IT MUST GET SOME TEXTUAL CHANGES FROM GOJ IN ORDER TO PRESERVE ITS SELF-RESPECT. LHO ALSO EXPLICIT IN HIS PREDICTION THAT TIME WAS NOW

RUNNING OUT VERY QUICKLY AND THAT SOME JAPANESE
RESPONSE MUST BE RECEIVED SOON. HE OBVIOUSLY VIEWED
USHIROKU'S COMMENTS RE OPENING OF AN AVENUE OF BREAK-
THROUGH AND THE PROPOSED VISIT OF TAKASHIMA AS
BEING MEANINGLESS WITHOUT COMMENSURATE JAPANESE
WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER TEXTUAL CHANGES.
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